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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

H5000, AS AMENDED

THE MODERNIZATION AND IMPROVEMENT OF THE MASSACHUSETTS
PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS
COLLECTION

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The goal of House 5000 is to develop a system of public education which will prepare each child not merely to survive, but to excel, in our emerging knowledge-based economy and learning society. We seek, therefore, to assure that all Massachusetts public school graduates are able to read, write, compute, understand computers and other new technologies, think critically and appreciate art so as to be able to learn and grow throughout their entire lives.

In order to achieve this goal, the Committee on Education recommends:

I. Setting Clear Objectives and High Standards

- . The Board of Education shall establish standards for the basic reading, writing, and computational skills as well as the fundamentals of a core curriculum comprising English, mathematics, social studies, science, computer technology, and the arts which all students must meet and master in order to graduate.
- . The local school committee shall establish graduation requirements which must assure that state basic skill and curriculum standards as well as further locally determined standards are met by a candidate for graduation.
- . The school committee shall inform a student who cannot fulfill the requirements for graduation of his/her deficiencies and provide a further program of study, if the student voluntarily chooses, to earn a diploma.

II. Providing Each Child With A Strong Start

- . All elementary schools shall offer an expanded two year kindergarten program, beginning in September 1985, in recognition that children grow socially, emotionally, intellectually, and physically at different rates and that children who are developmentally ready for school are more likely to be academically successful. Children may enroll, at parents' option, at age four. Enrollment is required at age five.

III. Individualizing Learning

- . The Board of Education will conduct uniform state tests at the fifth and seventh grades for basic skills. An additional basic skills test, locally constructed, shall be administered during an earlier elementary grade as determined by the local school committee.
- . Students not achieving state standards for basic skills shall be further evaluated, and, if appropriate, given an individual learning plan which shall provide for necessary remediation and programs suited to the individual student's needs.
- . Students not achieving the state standard at seventh grade shall be retested annually until the standard is achieved.

IV. Recognizing, Retaining, and Attracting Capable Teachers and Administrators

- . The Commonwealth will establish a minimum yearly salary for teachers of \$18,000.
- . The Commonwealth will establish a student loan forgiveness program for prospective teachers and repay twenty percent of the loan for each year of teaching.
- . The Commonwealth will expand the Commonwealth Inservice Institute to provide grants to teachers for ongoing professional development, computer use training and instruction, business internships, and sabbaticals for advanced study.
- . The Commonwealth will pay up to \$1500 or one-half of the "differential" on salaries for differentiated roles for teachers. At local option, school districts may develop such roles as teacher trainer, curriculum developer, and consulting teacher in instructional technology in order to meet local needs as well as utilize and develop the talents of teachers.
- . The Commonwealth will establish a Leadership Academy to train principals and other supervisory personnel in evaluation methods as well as personnel and resource management.
- . Each school district shall evaluate all teachers and administrators a minimum of once every two years.
- . The Commonwealth will establish an early retirement option for teachers with thirty two years service.
- . The dismissal procedures for teachers and administrators (commonly known as tenure) will be revised to provide a review of a dismissal action in a speedy fashion before an impartial and competent tribunal.

- . The Commonwealth will fully implement Chapter 847 which provides that teachers be provisionally certified and evaluated prior to receiving permanent certification. Additionally, the Board shall require passage of a pro-service examination in communication and language skills and the successful completion of a ninety hour graduate seminar in teaching skills and methods as requirements for provisional and permanent certifications, respectively.
- . In order to relieve the shortage of teachers in critical shortage areas, the Board of Education may award bonuses of up to \$2000 to provisionally or permanently certified teachers. Additionally, the Board may permit qualified but uncertified personnel to assist teachers on a temporary/perdiem basis.

V. Assuring a Learning Environment which is Conducive to Learning

- . The Commonwealth will establish maximum allowable class sizes of between twenty and twenty-eight for kindergarten through sixth grade.
- . The Board of Education shall make grants to school districts for alternative programs and services for students who are unable to function successfully in the regular education program. The grants shall include school adjustment counselling, drop-out prevention, and work study or cooperative education.
- . Each school district shall, as part of their Comprehensive Plan, specify measures to be taken in cases involving illegal substances or weapons, use of force, vandalism or violation of a student's or teacher's civil rights.
- . The Commonwealth will establish the School Committee-Professional Education Dispute Resolution Committee to foster a more cooperative and harmonious approach to resolving disputes arising from collective bargaining contracts.
- . Each school district shall provide for a council of students, teachers, parents, community members, and the principal in order to marshall community resources for each school building.

VI. Providing Resources and Incentives to Educate Well

- . The Commonwealth will provide funding to establish a statewide network of technical assistance centers to assist school districts in training teachers in the instructional uses of computer technology. It will also provide funding to local school districts for the purchase of microcomputers and educational software to insure that the benefits of using computers in education are available to all our students. Additionally, the Commonwealth will provide a tax incentive to Massachusetts high technology firms which donate computers and software to the public schools.

. The Commonwealth will also provide funding to vocational and comprehensive high schools for the acquisition and installation of modern technological equipment for instruction. The Commonwealth will provide emergency grants to school districts for the purchase of texts and materials in cases of severe shortages (School Improvement Fund).

. The Board of Education shall establish an office to provide technical assistance and grants to school districts for the education of gifted and talented students.

. The Commonwealth will also provide grants to schools in recognition of educational excellence (Effective Schools Program).

. The Board of Education and Board of Regents will award \$1000 scholarships to one thousand graduates of the public schools in recognition of academic achievement (Commonwealth Scholars Program).

. The Board of Education shall expand grants to school districts to prepare students to attain and retain employment upon graduation. Additionally, the Board, in fiscal year 1986, shall award five grants to school districts with a twenty percent or more drop-out rate. The five pilot programs shall provide for the development of a focused curriculum, summer and school year employment in the private and public (Commonwealth Youth Corps) sectors. The Commonwealth Youth Corps would offer community service work with human service agencies, child care and elder care groups, as well as repairing our communities' physical resources such as the parks and recreation areas. These programs will expand the successful initial efforts of programs such as Jobs for Bay State Graduates and the Boston Compact.

. The Commonwealth will establish the Lucretia Crocker Foundation which, through public and private funding, shall support the development, review, and replication of innovative and exemplary programs effecting lasting school improvements.

. The Commonwealth shall increase its share of the cost of local education from thirty-seven percent to the national average of fifty percent.

VII. Comprehensive Planning for the Modernization and Improvement of the Public Schools

- Each school district shall develop five year plans which shall provide for the ongoing development of the curriculum, teaching and administrative staffs, and academic and student support services so as to meet state and local objectives and goals.

- Each school district shall formulate its School Plan on an individual building basis and shall involve parents, educators, and members of the community in its development.

- The Board of Education shall provide technical assistance and coordinate resources to aid each school district in the implementation of its School Plan.

- The Board of Education shall review and "approve or "not approve" each school district's School Plan and its implementation every five years. A district failing to meet its School Plan's objectives and goals shall have one year to realize the goals. A district still failing to meet its goals shall have its Chapter 70 (state funding for education) controlled by the Board of Education.

VIII. Annual Review of Progress

- The Board of Education shall provide for a state assessment program at three grade levels (fourth, eighth, and eleventh/twelfth) to determine educational achievement in the major curriculum areas. The results will be reported on a building and district basis.

- The Board of Education shall annually report to the Governor and to the Legislature as to the Commonwealth's progress in achieving educational excellence and equality of opportunity.

In conclusion, the Joint Committee on Education expresses its appreciation for the valuable contribution made by the hundreds of citizens who testified before the Committee, by those who sent us their written suggestions, and by those who served as Special Advisors. We thank Governor Michael S. Dukakis for his cooperation and encouragement.

We believe that Massachusetts will assure that neither poverty nor discrimination, learning disability nor language barrier, outmoded curriculum nor lack of community support will deny one single Massachusetts child the right to a quality education.

FOR THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

GERARD D'AMICO
SENATE CHAIRMAN

JAMES G. COLLINS
HOUSE CHAIRMAN

